

**MAY IS LUPUS AWARENESS MONTH!**

## POP Lupus Facts

### What you may not know about lupus...

- Over 40,000 people in the Philadelphia Tri-State Region are living with lupus.
- Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that can damage any organ in the body (skin, joints, heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, etc.) and can have life-threatening consequences.
- An estimated 1.5 million Americans have lupus, and at least 5 million people worldwide have some form of the disease.
- Ninety percent of people with lupus are female. However, men, children, and teenagers develop lupus too. Lupus develops most often between ages 15-44.
- While people of all races and ethnicities can develop lupus, the disease occurs two to three times more frequently among African Americans, Asians, Hispanics/ Latinos, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans than among Caucasians.
- The causes of lupus are unknown; however, researchers believe that a combination of hormones, genetics (heredity), and environmental factors are involved - more research is needed to better understand the role of these factors in people with lupus.
- No two cases of lupus are alike. Symptoms can range from mild to life-threatening including everything from skin rashes to severe organ damage.
- Lupus can be expensive to live with and treat. The average annual direct and indirect costs incurred by a person with lupus can exceed \$20,000.
- Lupus can be difficult to diagnose. There is no single test to diagnose lupus, and its symptoms can mimic those of other diseases, vary in intensity, and can come and go over time. More than half of those living with lupus suffered for at least four years, and saw three or more doctors before receiving the correct diagnosis of lupus.
- Early diagnosis is crucial in helping to prevent long-term consequences of the disease. If you notice signs or symptoms of lupus, be sure to engage your doctor and ask questions.
- We have seen substantial progress in research and treatment for lupus over the past decade, and today, people with lupus are leading healthier lives and living longer than at any time in history. However, more research is needed to better understand the disease, identify new safe, effective, and tolerable treatments - and one day, ultimately, the cure. The LFA's National Research Program, Bringing Down the Barriers, is pursuing an aggressive agenda to find answers to the most difficult questions that have challenged researchers for years. The LFA is tackling issues to advance research and improve the quality of life for those living with lupus.